



## *American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Program*

The Administration on Aging (AoA) is an advocate for older American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians. AoA coordinates activities with other federal departments and agencies, administers grants, and collects and disseminates information related to the problems of older Native Americans.

### **Grants to Native Americans**

Under Title VI of the Older Americans Act, grant awards are made directly to tribal and native organizations representing older American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians. AoA's fiscal year 2001 budget includes \$23,457,000 in grants to these organizations to provide supportive and nutrition services, including congregate and home-delivered meals. Native elders receive nearly three million congregate and home-delivered meals annually. Most sites provide hot congregate meals four to five times a week. Home-delivered meals are delivered five times a week for elders who generally are in poorer health, are more functionally impaired, are more apt to be homebound and in need of transportation services, or in need of in-home supportive services.

Most programs provide modified diets for diabetics, or others who might be on low-fat, low-cholesterol, and low-sodium regimens. Several programs provide special nutrition services such as meals for homeless older persons, an evening meal option for home-delivered meal participants, and weekend home-delivered meals.

In addition to providing meals, nutrition education, screening, and counseling, Title VI programs are important resources for social interaction and supportive services. For example, congregate meal programs provide Native elders with important opportunities to meet with friends, participate in recreation and other activities, and take trips to other elder programs or state and national meetings.

The Older Americans Act Amendments of 2000 established the Native American Caregiver Support Program to assist caregivers of Native American elders who are chronically ill or have disabilities. Other vital supportive services include outreach, family support, legal assistance, and transportation to meal sites, doctor's appointments, and grocery shopping. Most programs offer health-related services, such as podiatry screening and blood pressure monitoring.

### **National Resource Centers**

Since 1994 AoA has awarded grants to two universities to establish National Resource Centers for Older Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians. These centers provide culturally appropriate health care, community-based long-term care, and related services. They serve as the focal points for developing and sharing technical information and expertise for American Indian organizations, Native American communities, educational institutions, and professionals working with elders.

The Native Elder Health Care Resource Center at the University of Colorado is developing a series of educational modules addressing some of the most prevalent and disabling illnesses that afflict elders. Each module emphasizes the social and cultural context related to the epidemiology, etiology, assessment, treatment, and prevention of a specific health problem.

Currently completed modules include:

- Diabetes Mellitus (Type II) in American Indian/Alaska Native Elders: Cultural Aspects of Care;
- Cancer Among Elder Native Americans; and
- Oral health in American Indian and Native American Elders.

Other modules in development include depression and alcohol abuse and dependence. More information about the Center is available on the web at: [www.uchsc.edu/sm/nehcrc](http://www.uchsc.edu/sm/nehcrc).



The National Resource Center on Native American Aging at the University of North Dakota is managed by a culturally sensitive staff and national steering committee. The Center provides education, training, technical assistance, and research. It also assists in developing community-based solutions to improve the quality of life and the delivery of related support services to the Native elderly population. A major project of the Center is the development of an elderly needs-assessment tool to assist tribes in planning for elder care services. More information about the Center is available on the web at: [www.und.nodak.edu/dept/nrcnaa](http://www.und.nodak.edu/dept/nrcnaa).

The Federal Interagency Task Force on Older Indians includes representatives of federal departments and agencies working to improve services to older American Indians. Task Force members focus on three areas of concern: health, transportation, and data. The Task Force recommends ways to improve interagency collaboration, enhance services, and identify problems or barriers that prevent or diminish collaboration. Members include:

- Department of Health and Human Services;
- Administration on Aging;
- Administration for Native Americans;
- Health Resources and Services Administration;
- Health Care Financing Administration;
- Indian Health Service;
- Office of Minority Health;
- Social Security Administration;
- Department of Agriculture;
- Department of Commerce;
- Department of Education;
- Department of Housing and Urban Development;
- Department of the Interior;
- Department of Labor;
- Department of Transportation; and
- Department of Veterans Affairs.

Working in close partnership with its sister agencies in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the AoA is the official Federal agency dedicated to policy development, planning and the delivery of supportive home and community-based services to older persons and their caregivers. The AoA works through the national aging network of 57 State Units on Aging, 655 Area Agencies on Aging, 225 Tribal and Native organizations representing 300 American Indian and Alaska Native Tribal organizations, and two organizations serving Native Hawaiians, plus thousands of service providers, adult care centers, caregivers, and volunteers. For more information about the AoA, please contact:

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